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Seventh Annual Report by the Chief Labor Correspondent on Trade Unions (1893), with Statistical Tables. London: printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1895. 8vo. pp. 284.

THE important place which labor organizations occupy in the industrial and social life of the wage earners of Great Britain, is exemplified in the annual reports of the Chief Labor Correspondent on Trade Unions. The completeness of detail with which the status, as regards membership, receipts, expenditure, etc., of so large a proportion of existing organizations is presented, is evidence of the stability of the unions and of their increasing disposition to take the public into their confidence. The very general co-operation of labor officials which Mr. Burnett, doubtless in consequence of his own position in the trade union movement, has been able to secure, together with the excellence of his own work of compilation, render his reports of great value as "a permanent record of the progress of industrial organization."

The present report deals with the year 1893—a year of unusual difficulty for the working classes, and especially exceptional on account of the great strike of coal miners in the midland countries. In years of depression there is ordinarily a falling off in the membership of labor organizations, and it is not surprising to find a slight decrease charged to 1893. The 534 unions which returned their membership statistics at the end of both 1892 and 1893, show a net falling off of 29,010, or about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The net decrease resulted from a very considerable decline in the membership of the unions of unskilled labor which more than offset the gains of those representing the more highly skilled trades. "Fourteen unions of men engaged in transport and other branches of such labor, show a decrease of 37,000 on the year. In the mining and quarrying group of trades, eight of the unions show a loss of 8,000 members."

The income of the unions in question was nevertheless increased from £1,749,099 in 1892, to £1,897,300 in 1893, or about $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This increase of income in the face of a falling membership, was the result partly of the increasing proportion in the total membership of skilled laborers, whose contributions would naturally be large, partly of the practice of many unions of increasing the assessment of members as soon as the funds fall below a certain limit, and

partly also of exceptional contributions from outside sources in aid of the miners' strike.

The total expenditures of the unions increased much more considerably than their receipts, and drew heavily upon their reserves. In 1893, the expenditure of the 534 unions compared, was £2,157,160, representing an increase of £436,177, or about 25 per cent. over the expenses of 1892. But 1892 was also a year of depression and large expenditure, and the full effect of the strain on trade union resources will be best shown by comparing the expenditure of 1893 with that of 1891. "In 1891, the total expenditure per member of the unions reporting, amounted to £1 2s. 1½d., but in 1893, it had risen to £1 16s. 10d." The increased expenditure resulted almost wholly from exceptional payments in the form of dispute benefit and out-of-work benefit. As regards 1893, the abnormal outlay in dispute benefit was of course largely due to the prolonged difficulties in the coal-mining industry; while an increase in out-of-work benefit was needed in many branches of industry, and especially in the engineering and ship-building trades.

Notwithstanding the exceptional degree in which the aggressive or "militant" side of the activity of trade unions was emphasized during 1893, the report for that year shows the many sidedness of their work, and the extent to which their energies are devoted to friendly aid and mutual insurance of members, and similar objects quite apart from industrial disputes. The large place which purely provident benefits occupy in their expenditures is indicated in the following summary table representing (with certain slight exceptions), the total outlay of 687 unions, with a membership of over 1,270,789 :

HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.	Amount Expended. £	Number of Societies.	Number of Members.
Out-of-work Benefit - - -	512,929	378	827,840
Dispute Benefit - - - - -	733,045	331	1,083,904
Sick Benefit - - - - -	238,729	228	622,908
Accident Benefit - - - - -	26,074	99	414,989
Superannuation Benefit - - -	117,339	89	458,678
Funeral Benefit - - - - -	94,192	387	983,834
Other Benefits, Grants, etc. - -	114,162	391	842,202
Grants to other Unions - - -	61,631	05	996,618
Working and other Expenses - -	347,461	679	1,269,070
Total - - - - -	2,245,572		

There are five appendices to Mr. Burnett's condensed report.

The first is an elaborate table (of which that above transcribed is a partial summary), stating the number of branches, number of members, number and percentage receiving chief benefits, amount of funds, amount and analysis of annual income and expenditure of the 687 unions reporting.

Appendix II. is made up of three comparative tables showing in the case of each union, for a considerable series of years, the number of members, the contribution per member, and the amount per member devoted to the payment of some of the principal benefits. It is to be regretted that the multitude of details embodied in these tables is not in any way so summarized as to bring out the changes in membership, dues and expenditure, among the unions as a body. A study of the particular cases of the membership table, however, shows clearly enough the stability of the individual unions, and the extent to which they hold their membership. The violent fluctuations in numbers which have characterized the history of some of our own labor organizations, are not found under English conditions. The most notable case of fluctuation appears to be that of the National Agricultural Laborers' Union, the estimated membership of which declined from 40,000 (doubtless partly nominal), in 1875, to 15,000 in 1881, to 10,700 in 1885, to 5,300 in 1887, and then, after falling to 4,254 in 1889, rose to 15,000 in 1891. The recent decline in the membership of organizations of unskilled laborers has already been noted. But in general, the unions throughout the period from 1870, show a fairly steady gain in membership, with comparatively few set-backs. The dues of members of particular unions, and the sums devoted to the payment of the several benefits show, of course, frequent and considerable variations according to special circumstances.

The remainder of the appendices are devoted to a tabulation of the chief causes of death of members of certain unions; to a directory of trade union secretaries; and to a collection of extracts from the reports of the officials of certain unions. These citations are designed to present the aims and position of the trade unions from the point of view of their own immediate spokesmen. In so far as they may be regarded as typical, they indicate a sturdy, but conservative temper among English trade unionists—a sober determination to use wisely the increasing power that comes with “the solid progress of the workers to a larger share in the national life and thought.”

C. C. C.